

issues*

No. 1



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• the death penalty in the united states • shelter for girls in mexico • criminal justice in america • environmental sustainability in indonesia • civil society in bosnia • breastfeeding in ghana • reflections on teaching in tanzania

Thanks for picking up the first edition of *issues*. In these pages you will find articles on topics as diverse as criminal justice in the US, breastfeeding policies in Ghana, and peacebuilding in Bosnia. Some are downers, some are hopeful; many are a combination. All address issues that Haverford students have encountered while doing internships and other projects through the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship. The mission of the CPGC is to bridge the divide between these global issues and the Haverford community, and accordingly the purpose of this publication is to create a space for students to discuss issues that they have confronted with the rest of us.

Please read on. Please think about these issues. Consider talking about them, even acting on them. Let these articles inspire you to further your own projects and conversations.

Peace,
Jenny and Justin

issues editors
March 2008



Pollsmoor Prison, Cape Town (Emily Higgs)

front cover: Kayford Mountain, West Virginia (Corey Chao)

A yellow, plastic chair and a 70-foot high wall mark the border between the Gibson family property and their neighbors. Every day millions of tons of coal leave Central Appalachia for power plants across the country, from this mountain and from many more just like it; 60% of the 1.2 billion tons of coal the US unearths each year comes from strip mines. Torn down truckload by truckload, coal seam by coal seam, over 400 mountains throughout Central Appalachia have met the same fate as Kayford.

Corey Chao '08 is an anthropology major who spent the summer as an intern in Whitesburg, Kentucky

Nonviolence as an Alternative in Pollsmoor Prison

In addition to conducting thesis research in South Africa this past summer, I volunteered at Pollsmoor Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison just outside of Cape Town. I facilitated nonviolent conflict resolution workshops with inmates through the Alternatives to Violence Project.

I found Pollsmoor to be a rather overwhelming place at first, and even a little surreal. Shaking hands with dozens of inmates standing in the hallways as I made my way to the workshops, sitting in a room with 40 orange-uniformed men of numerous languages and races, talking about their understanding and experience of violence, and hearing their stories, their jokes, their pain—this was how I spent my days. I eventually did get comfortable in Pollsmoor, and would realize with surprise from time to time how things that had seemed so unfamiliar, so daunting at first, had become easier and navigable. I found myself one day forcing my way through the five different checkpoints into the prison and heading straight to the office of the head of the prison to demand his signature on a form to allow a mixed-gender workshop for female and male inmates. It was not until leaving the prison that I noticed how far I'd come in just eight weeks.



Over the two months I spent in Pollsmoor, I facilitated workshops for over 200 inmates. The prison recently made the workshops a requirement for men who had committed violent crimes, and they expected us to lead workshops each week, every week. I gave certificates of completion to men who pledged their commitment to nonviolent lifestyles from that day forward, and I gave certificates to men who pledged unending loyalty to their gangs and vows of revenge. I saw fights and I saw forgiveness; I was respected and I was ignored. Despite being unable to reach everyone, I came away feeling I had made a difference, a visible difference, in some people's lives. I did not end gang culture in prison, or stop the economic injustice destroying South Africa along racial lines, but I did see the light in some of the inmates' eyes as they began to see that nonviolence is possible, that it is powerful—that there is an alternative to violence. My experiences in Pollsmoor changed the way I view nonviolence, the prison system, contemporary South Africa, and my own prejudices and preconceptions of what it means to be a criminal or to be forgotten.

Emily Higgs '08 is an independent major in peace and conflict studies who conducted thesis research in Cape Town, South Africa

Pura Vida

Lush leaves linger softly overhead
In the sun's sweet serenade
Swaying flowers of pink and red
Peek their heads around alleys of jade

Glimmering green water glistens
The swift air rushes through my body
As I fall through space without listen
The crisp cool awakes and embodies

My hammock sways slowly in the breezes
While the rain falls softly through the night
Effervescent day now teases
And seizes the day in mighty light

Costa Rica

Hot, humid air sticks everywhere
Sweat beads trickle down my sun burned head
As the stubborn sun strikes its stare
Not everything is like it was said

Black clouds shroud the day in darkness
Thunder rages on through endless nights
And dogs bark forever in madness
As I toss and turn with mighty fight

The barreling trucks nearly kill you
The people always rip you off
The kids never follow what to do
And the schools are like big pigs' troughs

'Pura Vida' is Costa Rica's motto that translates as 'pure life.' When tourism companies advertise Costa Rica, they often use this motto to convey Costa Rica as a place of pure, "natural" beauty in the heart of the amazing tropical rainforest. Although Costa Rica is a beautiful country, it is not only what tourists experience.

Just like any other country, Costa Rica has its problems and pitfalls. It is neither always sunny and beautiful, nor are the people always traditional and kind. While in Costa Rica, I learned the conceptual differences between the way Costa Rica is portrayed to tourists and the way people really live and interact with their environment.

Zoë Lloyd '09 spent 8 weeks in Chilamate, Costa Rica

Knowing Complex Women in Mali



Maybe you only sleep three hours each day because you bake little "gateaux" of rice flour, water, and a tiny bit of sugar late into the night. You bake late after your children are sleeping, after you've finished cooking meals for your family and the extended community that centers on your open meal times, after you've carried buckets of water from the well in town out to the edges where you have your garden, after you've made sure your husband is comfortable—if it's your night with him—and that your daughters are learning how to cook and clean, and that your sons have taken the animals far out to find something to eat and returned home safely. But if you are one of the women I encountered in Mali working with the PACOB project, the taxing difficulties of your everyday life doesn't lead you to hopelessness. Instead of breaking down, you are organizing with your friends to gain solidarity and work towards a better future—both immediately with improved income generating techniques, and in the long term with increased civic awareness and environmental sustainability.

I spent the summer in the circle of Djenné, region of Mopti, in Mali working with the grassroots NGO "Association pour l'Appui au Développement Intégré" (Association for the support of integrated development or AADI). Their main project that I worked with was the PACOB project, which helped women organize into micro-finance groups, so they would put money into a communal stockpile each week, which they could later borrow from to invest in better moneymaking ventures. NGO agents would come to the group meetings to help them organize and also to discuss various issues from civic education to genital mutilation. The whole group was focused on promoting environmentally beneficial revenue earning techniques, so instead of cutting down wood from the brush forests to sell (a typical activity) the NGO would fund the construction of communal gardens the women could cultivate, or would teach them how to grow and sell seedlings.

Mali is the third poorest nation in the world, and Mopti is the poorest region. My role at my NGO, AADI, was to travel around with the agents and interview groups of women, and I got the chance to really know some of the women, and living in the village saw and joined their routines. Their situations were hard, but they were also beautiful. In some villages women were still waiting for someone to come and save them, but in others, people were working to fix their own lives, and were succeeding. In Souma Bozo my interview never got beyond women describing the difficulty of feeding their family now that the reservoir where they used to fish had dried up due to desertification and global warming. But in Koina the village had used some trees donated by an NGO years before to start a reforestation project, and by selling some of the mature wood were able to buy a boat so children from surrounding villages could cross the river in the rainy season to attend the school in Koina—a school that the village had begun building on their own, and only received outside support for its completion.

The women I met were in very different places and I found research to be hard because everyone was such an individual with such different ideas, attitudes and background that I couldn't make generalizations. But that is what made this internship so meaningful. I can't come back and explain why their lives are so difficult, and I can't give a simplified view that everything is moving forward. But I can come back and talk about the amazing strength of these women, living and working through their lives in extremely trying conditions. And I have come back with real friendships that allowed me to see the complexity of the situation, and to me, real understanding doesn't manifest itself in an explainable sound bite, but instead is this ongoing contemplation—which to me was the most important result of my internship.

Allyn Gaestel '09 spent 10 weeks in Djenne, Mali



WHO DESERVES TO DIE?

Some of the most important work I did this summer came about purely by accident. During my internship I worked in Maryland but I lived in DC, so I commuted to work every day on the Metro. It wasn't uncommon for a daily conversation or two to be sparked by the "End Executions" sticker posted on my Nalgene. Frequently people would ask me how I would feel if my mother was murdered. "Shouldn't that person deserve to die?" they'd push, frustrated by the heat of the Metro and their inability to shock me. Quickly running over Metro-etiquette in my mind, and hoping to spark some discussion but avoid confrontation, I'd reply, "But what if the murderer was your brother?" In fact, now that I think about it, some of the best discussions about disparities in the legal system and instances of inadequate counsel happened on that train ride home, talking to people about why abolishing the death penalty isn't about letting murderers run free. Calling for a moratorium is a way of halting a statistically faulty, archaic, and permanent procedure so that the mechanisms that have been set in place to ensure that justice is done are valid and consistent. I hope those of you in Philadelphia will continue to engage in that discussion with me.

Lindsey Merikas '08 is a history major who spent her summer working at Equal Justice USA in Maryland

My Life in Money

I can't remember exactly the instance that set me off; I had been asked to give or lend someone money for the hundredth or thousandth or ten-thousandth time. I felt empty, spent, in so many ways. I was on my minibus ride home after a particularly pushy request, and I had a vision: I could see myself, like a statue maybe, made of stacks of coins—dollars or Kenyan shillings or both, I can't remember. And there were people around me, friends and acquaintances, who were chipping away at me, pulling off chunks of money. When pieces came off, the layers behind them revealed more money too—I had no core, no self, no personality; I was my money and my money was me.

As a white American traveling in a country where whites flaunt their affluence and nearly half of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, it's easy, retrospectively at least, to understand why this happened. It was hard enough to convince myself, let alone others, that I was a student with limited means while I had \$5000 in my bank account to get me through the next six months. It was hard to convince myself that all of my education on sustainability and misguided charity meant anything at all when I was being asked for \$15 to bring a sick child to the hospital. So I gave and I lent and I rationalized and I budgeted. And if I gave once, I would be expected to give again, to give more, to provide someone with that crucial boost towards a sustainable livelihood, like I was my own little microfinance bank. I crossed boundaries, struggling to negotiate a border that I would feel comfortable with, feeling greedy if I said no, used if I said yes.

In a way, it wasn't any different from what many Kenyans do every day. If your mother is sick and you don't have the money to see her, you start up a collection. If you don't have the money for the bus ride home, your friend will spot you, if he can. I was amazed at the different ways in which money exists in relationships, not just as a problematizing force that you try to avoid, but as something so real that it can't be avoided, with an understanding that we all rely on each other and it works out in the end (if not in this life, then the next one). Sometimes you need to think about money exchanges in big theoretical terms, but sometimes it's just helping out a friend. I guess I'm supposed to conclude, but I don't know if I have a conclusion that I can stand behind. I might have given too much, or too little, depending on how you look at it. I trusted some people too readily and I got hurt because of it. But I learned that while money speaks, ignoring the problem won't make it go away; it just means that you have to speak louder. Because there *is* something under that layer of money, and the more people who know that, the better.

Jenny Rabinowich '08 is an anthropology major who spent the spring and summer of her junior year in Nairobi, Kenya

Unexpected Connections

Casa Eudes lies just off a hectic street in Ciudad Juarez, set back from the road by a pitted dirt driveway and tall wrought-iron gates. The home provides shelter and supervision to young girls and women whose families abused them or cannot care for them, and is run by a group of nuns. Currently 36 girls live at there, though the facilities can house up to 60; for each of the three age groups housed at the shelter, there is one nun who acts as a shelter 'mother'. While the shelter provides an essential service to the girls, they are understandably starved for attention and stimulation.



Despite this, when we first arrived at Casa Eudes we were unsure of how to connect with the girls. We would attempt to play catch with them using an old, deflated ball, and try to chat in our limited Spanish. They mostly stared at us, giggled, or looked confused. It was hard to tell who felt more awkward about the situation, the girls or us.

Just when I thought we might not really be able to interact with the girls in any genuine way, a group of them came to our rooms to visit and discovered our candy bars and our technology. In one surreal evening, we found ourselves within a mob of little girls, all begging to listen to our ipods, sing along to reggaeton, and record their voices on the cassette I used for interviews. Weeks-worth of candy bars disappeared in seconds; little girls danced about our room and took photos of everything they saw. We had been housed in a secluded room off to the side of the girls' dormitories, and the room was filled with all of the broken technical equipment the sisters hadn't been able to fix. Radios, VCRs and computers were stacked up alongside the walls. We had tried plugging them in when we first arrived, but gave up quickly, assuming they were broken. That same evening, a girl named Sara, who couldn't have been more than eight or nine years old, decided to set about fixing up all the equipment. She lugged the pieces across the room and fiddled with knobs and extension cords. She was eventually able to fix up every piece of equipment in the room, until we had three radios blaring in a display of her victory over the machines.



In this moment of connection, the pressing importance of access to technology and education became clear to us. Girls who the day before had seemed listless and exhausted became tireless and bold when provided with a little attention and access to a computer, a camera, even a broken stereo. Someone like Sara, with an obvious skill for technical gadgetry, would not likely have the opportunity to go to college, or even to complete high school, without the intervention of an outside organization. Without further education, she would not be able to pursue her passion for learning, and her aptitude for technology would go to waste. Seeing the girls' passion in the midst of their situation made real the initially abstract task of trying to create more educational opportunities for the young women of Juarez, the girls' interest and excitement at any new knowledge transformed them.

Anna Marschalk-Burns '07 and Amy Pennington '07 received a Davis Projects for Peace grant to support the Esperanza Women's Fund in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

Criminal Justice in America

A 15-year-old mother, upset that her brother was being dragged off to jail, yelled a racist obscenity at the white cop. The cop handcuffed her, slammed her head against a fence, and then pushed her to the ground. She was arrested for assault of a police officer.

Another 15-year-old girl was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon, a rock. Yet two eyewitnesses testified that it was a different girl who threw the rock. And the complainant's own description of the girl who threw the rock matched the other girl's clothing that day.

These are the types of cases that I dealt with at the Public Defender Service. These issues of police brutality, eyewitness testimony, and the infallibility of a police officer's word are often brought up as failures of our criminal justice system that need to be addressed. They still exist, and temporary outrage has changed little.

Yet there are other failures of the criminal justice system as well. Mandatory sentencing guidelines have caused all sorts of issues. We had juvenile sexual cases where the parents didn't want to press charges, but the law required it. Perhaps more shocking has been the case of G.W. After having consensual oral sex with a 15-year-old girl when he was 17, G.W. was sentenced to the mandatory sentence of 10 years in prison. Although the Georgia law was changed last year, and Wilson was finally released last month after spending two years in prison, the case is emblematic of the larger problem of mandatory sentencing. Yet the problem has an easy solution: judges and juries should have the ability to alter a mandatory sentence in extraordinary circumstances. Such a provision would alleviate many injustices, yet not detract from the assumed effectiveness of harsh penalties.

Another issue is overburdening of social services. Many juveniles convicted of crimes are given social services to complete after a sentence. These can include community service hours, as well as mandatory tutoring and homework help, meetings with a parole officer, meetings with a social worker, and drug testing, all in addition to attending school. Although judges often think they are helping when they order these services, trying to manage them all can be extremely difficult for a young kid, even with a parent's help. And when these children cannot manage all of them, they fall further into trouble with the court, which is now less likely to be lenient. Judges need to start realizing that with these services, sometimes less is more.

We often dismiss the failures of our criminal justice system as an unfortunate consequence of reality. But for the real people who are unfortunate enough to end up on the wrong side of reality, the failures of our criminal justice system are immense. Both 15-year-old girls, by the way, were found guilty.

Matthew Klein '09 worked with a criminal justice organization in Washington, DC

Alchemy

"It's not swearing. It's science," says Bramantyo Projocucilo, self-proclaimed rector of the Shit-Become-Gold Alchemy Academy. He hosted me as an intern at the Academy, a.k.a. the organization Subur Gemi Nastiti in the village of Sekaralas, Indonesia, where I learned about the importance of creativity for sustainable community transformation.

Bram is an artist, but after the economic crisis of 1997/98, paint became extremely expensive, and Bram was conflicted about buying oils while so many people struggled to afford necessities. He then developed a new philosophy for his art, called Shit Become Gold. Bram started collecting and drying cowpats and other animal dung and eventually held an exhibition of his collections. He then began Subur Gemi Nastiti as a living art project in his home village, where most people rely on farming and selling rice.

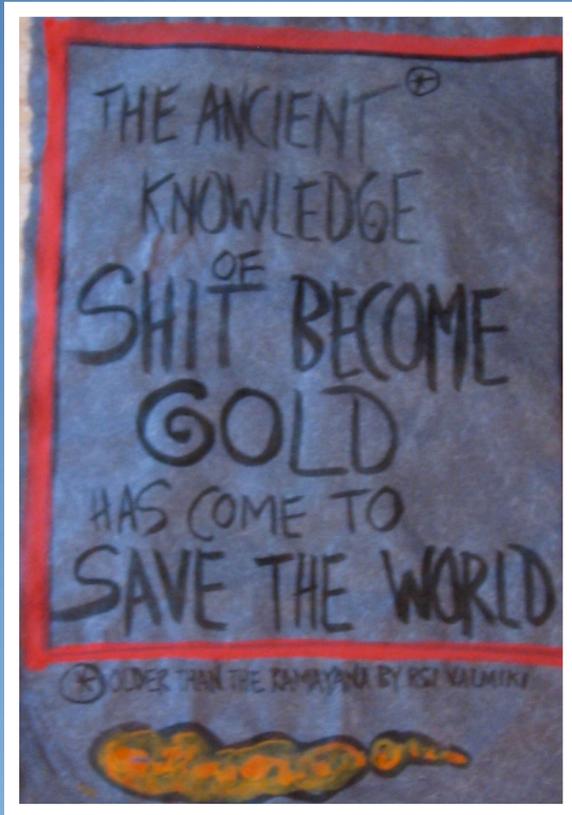
In the mid-1960s, Suharto's authoritarian government orchestrated "Massive Guidance" of Indonesia's Green Revolution, which aimed to increase food production through mandatory implementation of genetically modified (GM) rice and chemical pesticides and fertilizers. GM rice is harvested three times per year instead of two, and the Green Revolution successfully increased production. By other measures, however, these changes caused significant problems.

GM farming has had negative effects on the local environment, the local economy, and public health. Several species of fish and birds have



in Indonesia

disappeared. GM rice is less nutritious than organic rice, and this has contributed to a rise in cases of diabetes. The price of rice has decreased with increased production, while farmers now have to buy expensive pesticides and fertilizers.



Bram wanted to find alternative sources of income other than rice for people in his village. In 1998, Bram began hosting workshops, in which people learned how to make crafts from local materials. Today, Bram and his partner, Sari, head Subur Gemi Nastiti. In a workshop at Bram's house, three young men make handmade paper and bind books out of local plant material. Other members of SGN carve beads and make jewelry out of scrap teak wood.

Bram is beginning to transform his community with creative and sustainable techniques guided by the alchemy of Shit Become Gold. Materials that cost little or nothing are used to create beautiful crafts with minimal damage to the environment. Jobs were created that allow a few people to stay near their homes instead of moving to a city or abroad to work. This year, Bram began trying to convert his rice fields to organic, which is more difficult and labor intensive, but will eventually be sustainable and produce higher quality rice.

The magic of Shit Become Gold is creativity, which Bram and Sari promote and practice. Bram told me that before he found the Alchemy of Shit Become Gold, he lacked direction. After working with it, I have also found guidance in this model. Witnessing the transformation of plants to paper and scraps of wood to jewelry substantiated for me the potential of sustainable living, and I came to understand how art in practice is transforming a community towards a more sustainable future.

Justin Turkus '08 is a political science major who spent his summer as an intern in Sekaralas, Indonesia



Witness

"Who'll be a Witness for my Lord? I'll be a Witness for my Lord!" I'm sitting in the empty pews of a Franciscan church in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, enjoying how cool the church is compared to the sticky heat outside, and enjoying the fact that I'll actually be able to offer advice to the choir when they're done rehearsing. It's strange enough to hear American spirituals here, but the singers' tendency to neglect the English pronunciation of the letter "w" in this song never ceases to make me grin. Not having a musical background that at all approaches the choir members' training, there's very little I can offer when they ask me how their rehearsal sounded. Advice on English pronunciation is something I can handle.

Pontanima Choir's members come from all of Bosnia's ethno-religious backgrounds to sing together the sacred music of those traditions. At their rehearsals I hear Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, and Christian Orthodox (or Old Church Slavic) songs, and a few American spirituals. Some choir members are religious, some agnostic, some are just here to sing, and some are here because they feel a lack of spaces in post-war Sarajevo where they can spend time with people of different backgrounds without having to name or defend theirs. Their work in the Choir celebrates a belief — once widely considered to be fundamental to Bosnian life — that all these religions can coexist peacefully and beneficially in one society.

Coming from Haverford, where religious belief is rarely discussed outside of the Religion Department or worship groups, and where religious conviction can sometimes be viewed with a certain sort of suspicion (as though believers might privilege it over scientific knowledge or common sense), I had previously

only talked about and studied religion as a difference that could be manipulated toward conflict. Other than in literature on forgiveness, I'd rarely encountered the idea of religion as a path to reconciliation, or the celebration of religious difference as part of the activity of peace.

Pontanima includes clergy and others whose faith is deeply important to their lives, but also non-believers, or people who have the same approach to their faith that I've heard many Americans express ("I take the ideas that work for me, I leave the rest aside."). Choir members aren't connecting as people of faith; few of them ask me what my religious heritage is or how strongly I believe. But they're open to the idea that people have faith, that people believe — maybe deeply — and that the music that emerges to express and celebrate those beliefs is worth singing, and is worth sharing even in a country that was so recently and so brutally torn apart along ethno-religious lines. In a country where refugees still don't feel that they can return to some towns that experienced ethnic cleansing, where the intermarriage rate remains at a fraction of its pre-war levels, these people don't just come together as a choir, they come together to share the music that's at the very core of their religious differences, that's at the heart of how others experience the Divine. I'll be a "witness" to that.

Marien Levy '08 is an independent major in peace and conflict studies who conducted thesis research with an interfaith choir in Bosnia

The hills of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

IN GHANA, PROGRESS BY RETURNING TO MOTHER NATURE

In the 1960s, infant mortality in Ghana was about 130 per every 1000 births. It has now improved to less than 70 per 1000 births. The high mortality rate was largely due to poor nutrition of infants. Many Ghanaian mothers chose to feed their infants breast milk substitute, such as formula or even tinned or condensed milk that did not provide sufficient nutrients. In addition, formula was commonly over diluted to make it last longer.

Breastfeeding is a healthier way to feed an infant, as well as being easier and less expensive. So why were so many women choosing formula over breast milk? The former allowed the mother to work more easily. In addition, the use of formula created the image of being modern and wealthy. To counteract these factors, a very strong campaign was needed to explain the benefits of breastfeeding and the pitfalls of not. This re-education has now been entrenched into the culture.

The big greeting sign at the entrance of the hospital I worked at near Kumasi reads, "Baby Friendly Hospital. Breastfeeding Policy. To Protect, Promote & Support Breastfeeding" and then lists reasons for breastfeeding, as well as information on postnatal care. These signs were omnipresent at hospitals.

Postnatal care was similar to all other health practices I observed: not individualized, and communal. Mothers were directed to come to the hospital on specific dates. All the mothers, infants,

and grandmothers would pile into the waiting room and converse with each other while waiting for the midwife, as the nurses examined the babies right in the waiting room. Though the lack of privacy was glaring, it created an atmosphere where young mothers could discuss all the issues that come with being a new mother.

Each mother would then be led with her infant behind a tiny curtain and given an extensive checkup by the midwife. The midwife would discuss the importance of breastfeeding, explaining in loud Ghanaian manner to allow the infant to sit on one side for an extended period of time so that he can learn to suck.

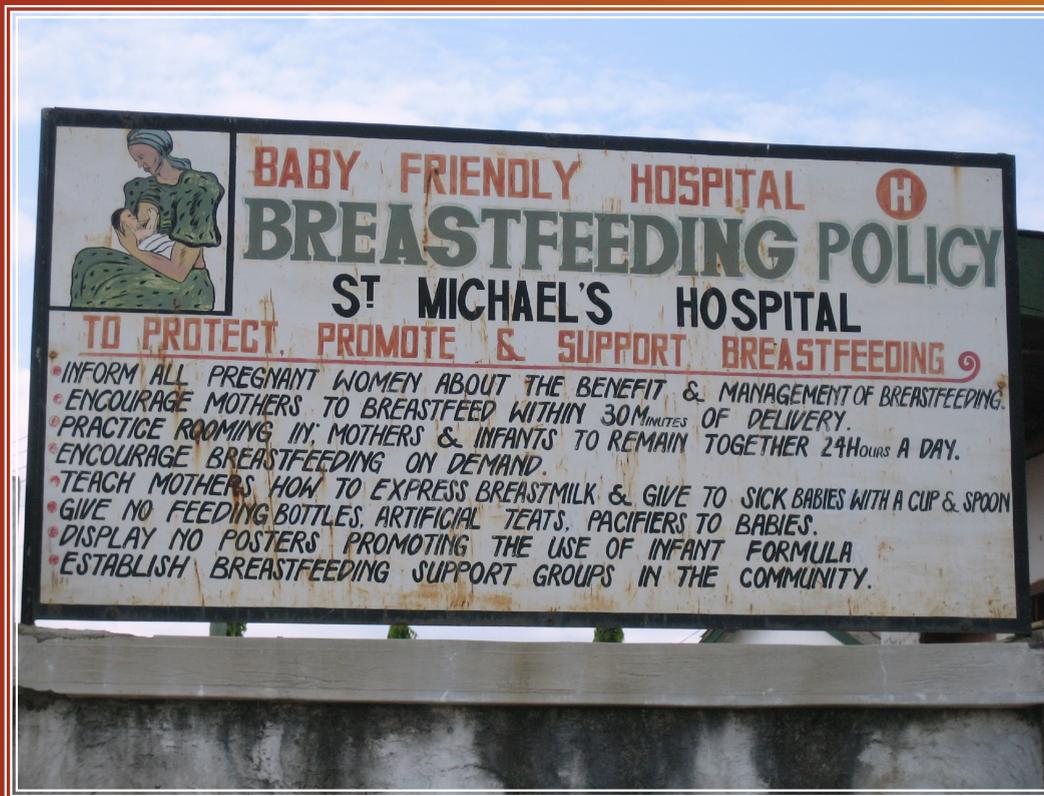
In addition to this personal tutoring session, hospitals also organized workshops on the correct way to breastfeed, explaining the proper duration and tremendous benefits. At one hospital, there was even a chant sung in Twi, the native language of the Ashanti region, which went, "What should we do? It is very important! Breastfeed! Breastfeed!"

Almost all of the mothers could explain to me why breastfeeding was a better alternative than formula. I saw so many mothers breastfeeding that I was at first surprised at why the emphasis

was so critical. Though breastfeeding is only one factor of many affecting infant mortality, the emphasis on breastfeeding has made a big difference. This example of reform represents a very reassuring idea. An underdeveloped country, such as Ghana, upon identifying a problem, can put forth resources to find a solution.

Here, resolution was really very simple; re-educate to follow Mother Nature.

Jenny Millman '09 spent 12 weeks in Accra and Kumasi, Ghana



Reflections

I worry.
About the kids.
Did Adamu take his medicine, did Babu talk to the girl he liked, are they all practicing their reading, do they remember our song do they remember us, and I know,
I hope,
they do.

It was hard seeing their sad faces upon departure, knowing we caused their tears.

They were blessed with a curse to love so quick and here I am, guarded and rarely able to leave my hesitant shield, unlike these kids love and laugh
I love their laugh.

I wonder if they will forget us.
I hope not, let them know how loved they are in truth we will
Never
Forget

Them and the impact they made, the stories they gave,
The musical tunes I have sung so many times my parents know the words:
"we are going to the house of the lord",
This lord who loves them but why must they suffer, some without parents, some without a home, some without three full meals a day and yet, and yet, They persevere.

But still, I worry.
What about when the day comes, when they wonder "why is life unfair? Why did this happen to me?"

They must know, they have the power to wield marvelous things,
Better than sweets, soda, and chapatti combined,
And pilau, can't forget pilau.

I believe in them they believe in me in them so what is the problem?

The world.

Designed for the rich to succeed and the poor to fail, the logic escapes me who created this world?

Me
Us
Them

So let's change it.

No more worrying because

Time is
Precious
The children are
Precious
Life is
Precious

I believe in them
believe in each
other.
If they tell me they
can, I think they
can,
I wish it,
I hope it,
I know it.



Sarah Derbew '09 spent four and a half weeks in Arusha, Tanzania, working as a teacher's aide at a primary school and nursery school